

Offensive Posters Oust Two Students From Dorm

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joke” and that they hung the latter pictures to spur “intellectual discussion,” although he was not clear in what forum, if any, such discourse would take place. “Some have suggested that we didn’t make that explicit enough in the note,” said Wolkin. “If the Borat movie had a huge banner across the screen saying ‘Just Kidding!’ it would dull the impact.”

“If you want to facilitate discussion about racism or xenophobia, or the use of offensive words or images, this isn’t how to go about it,” said Kate Goff, a senior BA/MA candidate. “There needs to be context.”

Wolkin believes that, while students have the right to not feel threatened, the administration has no authority to evict them for being offensive. He described the woman who filed a complaint against him and Engel as a “conservative Christian” and that she couldn’t “possibly take that strong of a personal offense” at the posters.

“The main intent was just to say, ‘Yes, this is provocative imagery.’ We don’t see anything wrong with using that,” said Engel.

On the Tuesday after the anti-Semitic posters were removed, Bertha Peralta, the First Year Advisor, pulled Wolkin and Engel out of their Freshman seminar class and escorted them to a disciplinary review meeting with Tom McDonald, the Managing Direc-

tor for Student Affairs. Shortly after the meeting, McDonald sent each student a letter explaining that the two were found in violation of the University Student Code of Conduct for Harassing and Disorderly Conduct. They would be removed from student housing indefinitely, and would have to make arrangements to get all of their belongings out of Loeb Hall by Thursday, November 1, which was before any decision would be made on an appeal. In the meantime, they were moved to the Marlton dorms and had all guest privileges suspended.

“It was intended as an offensive joke”

Wolkin and Engel immediately appealed to Ward, explaining that they felt remorse for any harm the posters had caused, but that their intentions had been misunderstood. While both said they would not have put up the posters if they had known the administration’s reaction, they said that they had a right to display the posters, referring to the “Free Exchange of Ideas” section in the University Code of Conduct. They also asked that the move-out date be extended until a final decision is made on the appeal, which Ward granted.

Prior to this incident, Wolkin

and Engel said they had not had any encounters with the administration. However, in a separate interview with a different reporter, Wolkin said that he had one previous, but unrelated, write-up for smoking in the dorm. Because of this incident, neither Wolkin nor Engel plan on staying at The New School past this year.

The roommates found out on November 7 that they have been evicted from Loeb. Wolkin plans to pursue legal action against The New School. “I find your interpretation of the concept of ‘discrimination’ quite misguided, as it seems to ignore the very basic concept of what defines satire,” wrote Wolkin in a letter to Ward.

At Loeb, residents had varying reactions.

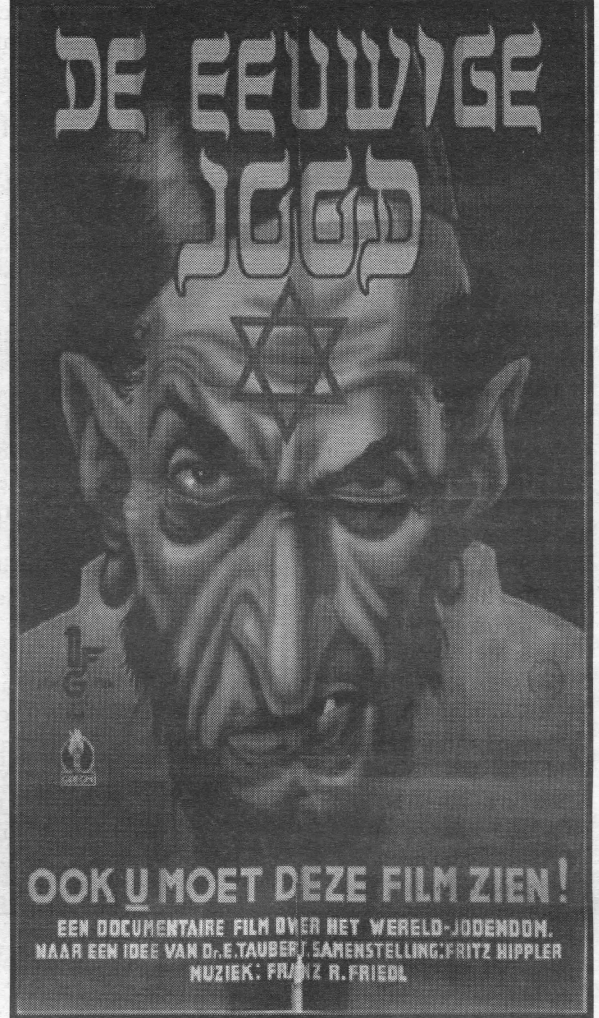
“I hope they are kicked out,” said Freshman Jenna Whittington, before the decision had been made. She said the posters were “absolutely disgusting.” Patrick Hughes, a freshman, called the administration’s actions “ridiculous” and that the RA should have asked Wolkin and Engel to take the posters down and give them a warning, rather than evict them from housing. Women from three different suites on Wolkin’s and Engel’s floor declined to comment.

On November 6, Wolkin had one of the anti-Semitic images as his Facebook profile picture and captioned it, “The Eternal Jew.”

I almost got kicked out of school housing for this.” After one student commented that the image looks like “the bad guy from *Aladdin*,” Wolkin responded, “Yeah, but he was a towel-head, not a kike.” That day, Wolkin’s status read, “Maxwell Wolkin is stickin’ it to the man.”

After Wolkin was notified that he had been expelled from Loeb Hall, he changed his profile picture to a black and white image that read “censored” in bold capital letters.

“If a full reversal of said decision is not enacted, I will most definitely be



Two students, both Jewish, displayed this poster. They intended it to be ‘satire.’

investigating my legal actions against the school,” said Wolkin.

Brooklyn Residents Shout Down MTA Fare Hike

New Proposals Could Cost New Yorkers \$2.25 Per Ride, \$81 for Monthly Pass

By KEVIN DUGAN

At the end of a long, chandelier-lit ballroom sat a dozen well-dressed and uncomfortable Metropolitan Transportation Authority board members on November 5. They stared out at over 100 public and private citizens, mostly Brooklyn residents, and were charged with explaining why they, and everyone else in the city, should pay more to use buses, subways and bridges.

After they made their statement, audience members came up to a podium to give their own. Over thirty speakers addressed the board, and each had their own way of telling them the same thing: Fare hikes should be a last resort.

The MTA plans on raising prices for use of subways, buses and bridges by 2008 to stave off a projected \$6 billion deficit, and are holding a series of public meetings this month to hear feedback from New Yorkers. At the first meeting, held at the Marriott near Borough Hall in Brooklyn, residents responded entirely in the negative and called for increased funding from the state and city government.

The MTA has two proposed budget increases. The first would raise single-ride subway fares to \$2.25, and monthly passes to \$79. Express bus fares would also rise to \$5.25. The second proposal would introduce peak and off-peak rates. Peak hours would be from 6 to 10 a.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. on weekdays. During off-peak hours, commuters would pay \$1.50 per ride, but bonus rides for purchases of more

than \$10 would be eliminated, and monthly cards would rise to \$81. Bridge tolls would also go up, some to as high as \$10 per round trip.

According to the MTA 2008 Preliminary Budget, the “major risks” for the budget include “changing economic conditions” and “growth in controllable expenses.” The budget does not explain these concerns further.

New Yorkers currently fund 56

“Not is not the time for any MTA fare increases”

percent of the MTA’s budget, according to a New York State press release. Commuters in Los Angeles and Chicago currently pay about 30 percent and 44 percent respectively, according to the Los Angeles Metro website and *Railway Age* magazine. There are roughly 4.9 million subway rides in New York City every weekday, according to the *New York Times*.

The first person to address the board was Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz. Markowitz set the tone for the evening by saying early into his speech that “now is not the time for any MTA fare increases.” Markowitz said that the majority of straphangers come from Brooklyn, and “Brooklynites contribute more than their fair share.”

A common refrain throughout the night was that the economy

is currently on a downturn, and with rising inflation, residents are having more trouble making ends meet. “Families have two breadwinners, and nobody’s really winning,” said Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President.

New School students also expressed concern over the rising prices. “The problem with an increase like that is that it’s a tax on the working people,” said Danny Ruben, a sophomore Jazz student. But he also added that “it’s hard to gauge how much [an increase] will affect students” who work their way through school.

Another concern was that the increased fares would “drive residents into cars,” Markowitz said. Stringer said that if more commuters drove to work or school, this would increase traffic and endanger the health of city residents. This would be at odds with Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s PlaNYC, which proposes to increase tolls for anyone driving into Manhattan below 86th Street, he said, forcing residents to pay more to go to work no matter how they get there. According to PlaNYC, 34 % of New Yorkers drive to work, and all bridges and highways are nearing or at capacity for traffic.

New York State Senator Eric Adams echoed these complaints. “The common denominator is that [the working poor] have no other way to get where they need to go.”

Stringer asked the board to wait until April 15, when the state will release its budget proposal, to decide on any fare hikes. Policymak-

ers and MTA officials alike hope that Governor Eliot Spitzer will endow New York’s public transit more generously than the previous administration did.

“I certainly hope to get more funding from the state and from the city,” said Ed Watt, MTA board member and Secretary Treasurer of the Transportation Worker’s Union, in an interview. “The MTA is bearing a large load of that freight.”

There are currently two identical bills in the New York State Assembly, A9424 and A9425, which propose subsidizing the MTA. “Since

1995, the MTA has not received funding proportionate to the increased costs of service delivery,” according to the bills, which were sponsored by NY Senator James F. Brennan. “It is necessary and prudent at this time to restore the state funds...to increase state and local assistance the MTA.”

During the meeting, City Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol seemed to make a veiled political challenge to the MTA. “The Democratic Party I believe in would never endorse this fare increase,” he said.

MTA Hikes at a Glance

The MTA has proposed fare hikes to fund a projected \$6 billion deficit. New Yorkers currently fund about 56 percent of the MTA’s budget. For more information, visit www.straphangers.org.

Proposal One



Proposal Two

Raise base fare to \$2.25

Raise 30-day pass to \$81

Increase cost of 6-rides-for-5 card from \$1.67 a ride to \$1.88

Eliminate 6-for-5 card, replace with \$2 pass for peak hours and \$1.50 for off-peak